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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0841  
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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9125  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 7371  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5261  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3523  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 9686  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 6980  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3859  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

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SUBJECT: MALDIVES: OVERVIEW OF RECENT LEGISLATION PASSED BY  
MALDIVIAN PARLIAMENT

1. SUMMARY: The Maldivian parliament recently passed the Child Sexual Abuse Act and an amendment to the penal code that decriminalizes defamation. President Nasheed has signed the former into law and is expected shortly to sign the latter. While local journalists and international press freedom groups have welcomed the legislation on decriminalization of defamation, local NGOs and UNICEF have called for a reassessment of an article in the Child Sexual Abuse Act, which they believe could be used as a loophole by child sexual offenders. END SUMMARY.  
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ACT  
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2. On November 4, the Maldivian parliament passed the Child Sex Abuse Act, which codifies child sex offenses for the first time and outlines sentences of up to 25 years for those convicted. Out of the 60 members in attendance for the vote, 58 voted in favor, two voted against, and one abstained.

3. The bill identifies various offenses for performing sexual acts in the presence of a child, and Article 19, which have previously. FOWLER